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site given above might suggest that such a term was justified. To my mind however such a conclusion would be completely erroneous, if animism is understood to mean the worship or reverence of natural objects for the forces implicit in them. The very complicated beliefs of the Lepchas' two (I should perhaps write three) religions will be dealt with fully later, but the religious attitude towards natural objects can be briefly summarised. All supernaturals, good and bad, though eternally living outside the world, have innumerable manifestations with which this world is filled. These manifestations, or replicas, of the supernaturals, choose various natural phenomena for semi-permanent habitation, agreeable phenomena—lakes, or fruit-trees or fruitful land—if the supernaturals are generally benevolent; disagreeable places—useless trees, water-falls, rocks or barren ground—if the supernaturals are generally malevolent. Each type of supernatural has a preference for a particular kind of habitation; thus all the deut *moong*—fever devils—live in big isolated trees, sabdok *moong*—skin-disease devils—in outcrops of rock.

According to lamaist beliefs everything in the world (with the exception of the earth itself and some big mountains) possesses a soul; for the soul is the animating principle of all life, without whose intermediary nothing could move or grow. But the souls of objects and animals below the vertebrates are very weak and transient things; they are easily killed and never reincarnate. For the lamaists the soul is the verbal equivalent of life; and the 'soul' of a rock or tree is only the essential quality of the rock or tree with no powers beyond making the rock hold together or the tree grow in due season. The soul of a rock or tree or river is not altered if a supernatural takes up his abode therein.

The word with which Lepchas invariably refer to the habitations of supernaturals is *li*, the word which they use for their own houses. The houses of supernaturals—particularly malevolent supernaturals—are avoided, because the devil might be annoyed at the intrusion on his privacy and would show his resentment by inflicting illness on the intruders. Similarly the supernatural would resent any injury done to his house, such as cutting down his tree or chipping off parts of his stone, and would punish the rash man by paining him in that portion of his body which corresponded to that portion of the house which had been destroyed; thus cutting from the top of a tree or a rock would result in head pains, from a branch or an outcrop in arm ache, and so on. Consequently the recognised

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habitations of devils are paid the respect of avoidance; and should a man be forced to go near to one of an evening he would perhaps burn a little incense—either juniper leaves or rice mixed with butter—so that the devil shall be gratified and not pursue him.

Except for being avoided and pointed out as local curiosities these devils' habitations are not distinguished in any way. Sacrifices are generally not made to or near them; if it were divined that illness was caused by a manifestation of a devil whose exact habitation was known, offerings might be made at that place; but I neither came across nor heard of one specific instance of this. All the numerous ceremonies that I witnessed and heard about took place in or just outside the house of the actual or potential sufferer; and though the offerings were often carried away after, they were never taken to the devil's habitation, but either to uncultivated ground, or to a place where two paths crossed. Only in one case did I hear of a devil's habitation being paid attention to. In the 'garden' of Jiroong are two outcrops of rock, which are the homes of Sabdok *moong* and his wife Loo *moong*. This female devil causes a specific skin disease, and if a person living in the neighbourhood should suffer from this, her stone (the lower of the two) will be anointed with holy water by a lama, and with milk by a Mun. It had been discovered by divination that this was the only home of Loo *moong* in the immediate neighbourhood, and the somewhat rare skin-disease, which is her speciality, could only arise from the anger of that particular manifestation.

The three big stones called *Kali lyang* in different parts of Lingthem fall into a different category. They are the places where laymen make sacrifices to keep away predatory animals. These sacrifices of different sorts of food are made once in the hot weather and once in the cold, and at other times if predatory animals are causing anxiety or annoyance. The stones themselves have no supernatural value at all; they are just the places where the sacrifices are always made.

There is however one big exception to the general rule. Nearly every family line—*ptso*—originated from the union of a particular lake and a particular mountain, the lake being the mother.[12] To these maternal lakes either annual or triennial (depending on the customs of the *ptso* in question) offerings must be made by all the descendants, or the inhabiting supernatural will withdraw her

[12] The Salong *ptso*, to which the serpent eaters of Pantoong belonged, is peculiar in tracing its original ancestor to the union of a woman with a monkey.

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favour and the people will not prosper and may suffer from sore eyes. It is not necessary that everyone should visit the lake in person; gifts can be given by proxy by another member of the same *ptso*.

There is another lake, *Luksom partam*, high up in Zongu, from whence birth is meant to have originated. Sterile couples who wish for children should visit this lake, spend the night on its bank copulating, and then in the morning throw into the waters a silver rupee and a *chimi* (altar light) to please the gods. If necessary this may be repeated annually for three years. The old widow, a nun, who told me about this had performed the complete rite with her husband, but unsuccessfully.

The connection between water and birth runs all through the Mun mythology. In the divine world where the two gods Tak-bo-*thing* and Narzong-*nyou* live there is a stream called Lungfung which represents the birth of male children, and a well called Rung-zel *oong-lap* which represents the birth of female children. This well is guarded by a supernatural boy called Sathim *ong*, and on occasion a family which has many girls and no boys will get a Mun to make sacrifices to the boy and the two gods to make the two pieces of water change place.

It will be noted that even in the case of these sacred lakes an explicit distinction is made between the lakes themselves and the supernaturals who inhabit them.

Devils have been occasionally seen by some people, sometimes looking like fierce animals, sometimes more or less like human beings (though generally covered with hair), sometimes as misty and gigantic shapes. They are far more frequently heard, whistling and crying, sometimes wailing like a banshee; and the god of hunters, Pong *rum*, persecutes those who displease him with poltergeist-like performances, throwing stones at the people or their houses and so on. To see or hear a devil is alarming, but not excessively so; there is nothing to be done except to run away or to turn aside one's eyes; though some bold people throw stones at devils and shoo them away as though they were marauding dogs. In the case of poltergeist performances the sufferer will burn incense, or perhaps just smoke a cigarette at the devil. To guard against the accidental meeting of devils the lamas prepare amulets, composed of charms written on paper and sewn into a piece of cloth which is worn on the dress; and Mun give the specially prepared roots of *s'lek* (a dioeceous plant which grows above the snow level) to be rubbed over the body.

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some of the community entirely from this pursuit, and even those who are not lamas feel a certain disclination to killing animals. The settled houses and the greater amount of ground under cultivation and increasing domestic herds make the necessity for wild animals less urgent, and the growing commitments of agricultural life give less time for hunting. Indeed nowadays if a young man wants to go hunting (and some of the more adventurous ones do) he usually has to sneak away when his elders are not looking, and is liable to get a good scolding when he does return for withdrawing his labour from the fields; of course if the father is a hunter the son would be encouraged, but in Lingthem the only consistent hunter was Ashyok *youmi*, the most conservative man of the village who still wore the Lepcha dress and the little straw hat with a feather in it, which was once the typical Lepcha headgear, and now practically only survives as an archaic and picturesque article of dress among the servants of the Maharajah. Moreover the presence in the neighbourhood of shops where grain can be bought considerably mitigates the stress of the hungry season just before the harvest, when formerly people used to be driven into the forest for food.

When a youth, usually about the age of fifteen, wants to start hunting, it is necessary for him to acquire a bow and arrows and also to learn the requisite ritual. In most cases he cannot get either the weapons or the instruction from his father, who would be angry at the boy withdrawing his labour from the fields; the weapons he will most probably get from an elder brother or uncle or a friend, the instruction from some learned old man, probably quite unrelated. The first few times he will go on a hunting-party without weapons, but from the moment he has been on one even though he has not killed he must make the requisite sacrifices. No ceremony is connected with his first kill but he himself must not eat a piece of this kill, nor of the first hundred animals he kills with his bow (animals killed with a gun do not count; they can always be eaten). Were he to eat the first hundred animals he would develop sores and leprosy; but after he has killed this number a hollow will develop in his shoulder blade and after that he can eat with safety. The earlier animals he takes home to his family who eat them, giving him some domestic food instead. The commonest game animals are various sorts of deer; when bears are trapped their flesh is eaten, but they are seldom caught nowadays; one reason is that sexual abstinence for three months after setting a trap is imposed on bear hunters (there is no similar abstinence for the hunting of any other animal); if this rule is not observed the bears will escape from the trap unharmed.

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girl's parents with Rs. 15 and a pig as 'soup money'; these gifts represent the price of the soup given as special food to nursing mothers. Should he want the child and not its mother he must pay for both the *thip-song* and the 'soup money'. If the father is unknown or refuses to acknowledge his responsibility the girl's family performs the ceremony; at the end of the ceremony a tree is designated as the child's father; a wooden phallus is stuck into the trunk and it is then spat on and otherwise insulted by all present. The tree is meant to wither after the child's birth.

It is a very great disgrace for a girl to produce a bastard, and it is believed that possibly some girls somewhere bear their bastards in field-houses or the forest and kill them rather than confess to the act. I could get no concrete instances of this and the idea of infanticide is so appalling to Lepchas that they will not even willingly entertain the idea of its being practised by strangers. There is no known method of avoiding conception and the only abortifacient believed in, and that very half-heartedly, is the bathing in hot sulphurous streams which are found some distance away in Zongu.

When a bastard is born there is no gathering of friends and relations for the birth feast on the third day and a lama will not come to the house to cast the child's horoscope; instead either the child's or the girl's father must visit him. Apart from this the child is treated normally. Should the girl marry later the child will stay with its maternal grandparents and will be brought up as their child; it will be considered as a member of their *ptso*, and, if a boy, will have the same share in the heritable property as his maternal uncles. Although bearing a bastard is an act of the greatest shame, once it is over and done with no attempt is made to hide the matter or to hush it up. People will announce quite openly that they or their relations are bastards, or have born or begotten bastards; the shame situation has been successfully passed and is therefore no longer a cause for unpleasant feelings. Bastards are believed to suffer from one of three inherent weaknesses; either their mothers will die young, or their health will be bad, or they will suffer from goitre (three of the six supposed bastards of Lingthem have this complaint). Goitres are of two sorts; one of them is extremely lucky and productive of wealth and prosperity;[15]

[15] The seven men of Mayel (see Chapter Nine) who are the patrons of grain harvests are all said to have enormous goitres and as people sow the grain they murmur in prayer to them '*Ta-yoot thimbu : sambo thimbu*'—'May we have big goitres; may we have big harvests.'

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848 the other is the *tamtoom* of bastardy. It is possible to diagnose
753 bastardy goitres because these will ache in the presence of corpses or in the houses where bastards have been born.

There are six reputed bastards in Lingthem, but only two of these were born from unmarried mothers, and for only one of them, the old mother of Pargeut, did the father perform *thip-song*. The first Dorjé Lapoon is said to be the son of a travelling Sikkimese; he was born during his father's prolonged absence. Lumba *chith-embu* is believed to be the bastard of a lama of Talung on the ground that they look exactly like one another, and Dunbi, for the same reason, is said to be the son of his father's 'younger brother'. In the face of strong physical resemblance with a possible father, it is generally believed that this man, rather than the husband, was the begettor. Nahyeun is generally believed to be Dunbi's bastard; he was born of an unmarried girl when his father was already married. Little Seryop Katoo who was born when his mother's husband was twelve has already been mentioned; his begettor is said to be Jiroong's elder brother. In her time Kurma's mother bore two bastards, one before her marriage, and one when she was a widow. There are cases in which a man believes himself to be the father of another man's child; but these suspicions are always kept very quiet.

832 The production of a bastard is no draw-back on the girl's subsequent marriage; on the contrary, the fact that she has shown
842 herself fertile makes her if anything more desirable. The Lepchas have a great and justifiable fear of sterility; they do not on the other hand manifest or express any fear of impotence, and no aphrodisiacs are employed. One or two extremely peculiar and incongruous ones are known of, for they are hawked about in Gangtok and other towns where there is a ready market for them among the Hindus, and, somewhat less, among the Nepali. For the Lepchas these are extremely funny; they cannot conceive of the loss of potency, any more than the loss of appetite, except through illness or old age.

842 There is an altogether surprising amount of sterility among the Lepcha women of Zongu.[16] Of the fifty-six married women over twenty, eighteen were completely sterile and one had only produced a still-born daughter. Of these seven had reached or passed the menopause without producing any children; four are between

[16] For the complete fertility tables of the women of Lingthem, and also for complete life tables see Appendix I, a.

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performed to solemnise a marriage, to set up the *ingzong* relationship, to mark the formal swearing of an oath or before starting any unusual undertaking. It is used in all ceremonies for which a blessing is invoked (as opposed to exorcisms), sometimes alone, sometimes with the *lafét*[12] sacrifice. It is always made privately in each household after the sowing of a field. It is the most solemn sacrament in Lepcha life.

When a Mun is called in to exorcise a devil the most usual situation is as follows. After the specific devil has been divined the Mun spends a night in his own home *munthen*-ing—that is summoning and communing with his possessing spirit—to discover the reason for that particular devil having attacked that particular person, and to learn what sacrifices or ritual are necessary to exorcise it. The question of causation is bound up with the conception of *tamtoom*—the necessary consequence of an earlier act; often this act was not committed by the sufferer, but by fairly remote ancestors. Thus the Mandal suffered from lumbago as the *tamtoom* of one of his ancestors having abandoned a baby in a field-house, where it was burnt to death. A complicating cause, which also accounted for his failure to produce a son, was that the spirit of his first dead wife was plaguing him because, although herself a Mun, she had been cremated and conducted to heaven by lamas (as though she were a nun) instead of being buried and led to a heaven by a Mun. Angered at this treatment her spirit had been transformed into Sabdok *moong* and in this guise came from the *rumlyang* from time to time to plague her husband and to prevent his having any sons. In this task she was assisted by the Hit *rum*, the Mun god who looks after the new-born dead.[13]

Such a *tamtoom* as this is almost impossible to lift but the Mandal did all in his power to persuade Sabdok *moong* and Hit *rum* to lift the curse, making many sacrifices, and even summoning with many presents an old and widely famed Mun[14] from a village two days journey away. Before Gongyop started performing the

[12] See Chapter Two, p. 74.

[13] The Mun worship two supernaturals, Hit *rum* and Dé *rum*, who are considered to be ancestral gods who look after all dead Lepchas. Their positions and functions in the Mun eschatology will be more fully described in Chapter Thirteen.

[14] This man, besides being a Mun, was also a Pau and Yaba. Gongyop, who assisted in the sacrifice, said that he had heard he was a 'black' Mun—Mun-mook Mun—, but he was not able to form any opinion from the prayers he heard him say.

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241 782 selves will give a small present to the Mun who will sing for all of them. The grain which is used in this sacrifice has to be specially ripened in the sun in the same way as the grain for seed is ripened. This completes the ceremony of sowing and it is always followed by a feast in which meat is eaten.

The ceremony of harvesting is far more complicated. It is only employed for the dry rice. When the dry rice is ripe a little is picked to be prepared for *chi* and when the *chi* is ready the owner of the field summons all his friends and they go together to pick rice. Until the ceremony is completed nobody, not even children, may pick any grain or he would get ill; if anybody gets stomach-ache at that period people will say that he has picked rice before it was harvested.

It is necessary to have ready beforehand the smoke-dried *tafoot* of a pig. The *tafoot* would seem to be the gall-bladder or spleen; it is round and has a white smelly liquid inside and is found near the bladder, but in pigs and musk deer it is said to be found near the penis at the end. On the day of reaping this *tafoot* is taken up to the field of dry rice together with two burning brands from the house-fire and also a *patyoot* of *chi* made from the new rice. When the party arrives, a place in the centre of the field is chosen as the *ʒo-lam* (the place where the crops are heaped); some rice-plants in the centre of the *ʒo-lam* are tied together into a sheaf and then the two burning brands will be held above them and on these a piece of the *tafoot* will be put. Then an old and experienced man—not the owner of the field but any one of his workers—will be chosen to represent a man of Mayel (called for the ceremony Mayel-mu) and he will blow on the *tafoot* and speak; while this is done a special measuring basket is held upside down over the brand. The old man will summon the gods and the ancestors and will say 'Come and see the smoke; burr—burr—burr—burr'. Then all the people present will repeat, 'burr—burr—burr'. By this invocation it is hoped that the gods will come and bring back all the grain eaten by wild birds and animals.

Standing by the speaker is a woman not directly connected with the field owner, who has been chosen for the day to represent Talyeu-mu, one of the earth sisters. When Mayel-mu has finished his invocation the measuring basket is put on his back and Talyeu-mu cuts the tied grain and puts it in the basket. Then Talyeu-mu and Mayel-mu, who acts as her load carrier, go round the *ʒo-lam* cutting a basket of rice for Talyeu-mu; at the same time

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experience and a small knife. Babies are not slapped to make them 844
cry or take in air; they do so, it is said, automatically. Nothing is done to the mother's breasts to induce lactation. Considerable anxiety is felt, especially by the father, if the afterbirth is long in descending; if there is a delay the severed and tied navel-cord is attached to the mother's toe and she is then *pék* by a Mun. As soon as the afterbirth has appeared it and the cord are rammed into a bamboo container which is carefully covered with a cloth. Somebody not too nearly connected with the delivered parents will take this and either throw it into the river or fasten it high up on a tree out of the way of insects and animals; for should it be eaten the child will suffer from skin eruptions. Formerly the afterbirth used to be buried but now this is no longer done; for if it is buried in wet [753] ground the child will get eye disease, if in cultivated ground the crops will be spoilt. One or two people said that in certain family lines the afterbirth is still buried, but I could not get any concrete examples of this practice.

If after the birth the blood does not flow freely a blood clot will be formed; to remove the clot the mother is given hot soup and drinks, and fish boiled in butter; if the clot does not come down she will die.

If labour is difficult a fowl and a goat should be sacrificed; the mother must eat the fowl by herself. The goat's heart, lungs, and liver must be boiled and hashed and mixed with rice and offered to the gods and devils; the rest of the meat belongs to the officiants.

It is believed that with breach presentation it is impossible for the 845
baby to be born alive and it is rare that the mother should survive this; it is due to one of the parents having tied up a packet at one end to carry food and then, instead of taking the food out of the mouth, to have taken it out of the tied end. It is good if a new-born baby has hair, but should a child be born with a tooth in its head (a thing unheard of) that baby will be an incarnate devil. It will be reared, but when it grows up its thoughts and curses will be able to kill people. No cases are known of a child born in a caul; if it did occur it would be lucky. A child is unaffected by being born with a strangulating cord; it is the *tamtoom* of one of its parents having twisted a rope or string round their neck in the later stages of pregnancy. Birth-marks vary in their significance according to their place and colour. Big splodgy birth-marks show that in its former incarnation the child was a cow; red marks on the hands and arms that the child was formerly a killer of men—a soldier

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853 up to puberty. Gongyop's only surviving son took the breast until he was ten; and Pursang, Chano's second 'son', was suckled by a childless aunt[4] until her death, which occurred when he was eleven.

853 Babies are nursed continuously whenever they cry. Very young children are held in the mother's arms and she nurses them stand-
854 ing; but when the babies get a certain control of movement the favourite nursing position is for the mother to sit cross-legged while the baby lies freely on its back in the mother's lap. The mother leans forward slightly so as to bring the breast within reach, and supports the baby slightly with one arm. The suckling situation is pleasant and comfortable, but save perhaps for patting the baby's bottom gently with one hand the mother does not pet or play with the child and will usually talk to people standing by while the baby is drinking. I never saw a mother withdraw the breast until the baby had quite finished. At night the baby's bedding is so placed as always to be within reach of the mother's breast.

After the age of about ten months a baby does not cry for food if it is in its mother's arms but claws at the front of her dress in an attempt to undo it; only if the desired food is then withheld does it start whimpering. If it is being held by other people, whether men or women, it will also claw at the front of its carrier's clothes; if the mother is absent the baby can often be quieted by letting it lay its head against the warm body of its carrier.

● [753] Nursing mothers should not eat bones or other hard things or else they will lose their teeth; apart from this there are no diet restrictions unless the baby falls seriously ill (accidents, infantile diarrhoea or teething trouble are not considered serious illnesses). In such cases the mother must avoid salt, meat, and *chi*; divination will discover whether wet or dry rice is more suitable for her, and she will live on that together with buckwheat, a *lavatera* leaf, and butter. Besides this she has to avoid sitting in the sun or in damp places. None of these restrictions apply to the father.

854 During the first year of their lives young children are washed in warm water morning and evening; after that they are washed once

[4] I was told that this woman had never borne a child, but the people who told me about her were not near relations, and it is possible that she had borne a still-born infant or one who had died very young. The death of very young children is not taken much notice of, and often not remembered except by the parents. The three people I discussed the matter with however all declared that this aunt had never borne a child.

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shed which was put up for the bridal party he copulated with a girl carrying a child about four years old. The girl stood with her back to a tree, clasping it with her arms behind her head and lifted one leg. But at the moment of orgasm she let go and fell sideways; nobody was hurt. The child made no comment.

April 2nd.

Kurma up all day, chiefly talking about hunting and ritual and told about the reason why his family are no longer good hunters. He also talked about dreams and their meanings and explained that one of the results of adultery is that the deceived husband will dream of the *tafep*—ladle used for pouring out *chi*. Kurma said that he had had such a dream during the life time of his second wife; he was later informed that the dream was founded on fact, but since he had seen nothing he could do nothing. He denied that he had ever had any sort of overtly sexual dreams or dreams of committing crimes.

April 4th.

Tafoor was present most of the morning describing funeral ceremonies. Kurma came up rather late. He talked about the poltergeist manifestations with which Pong *rum* had plagued him afrer he had given up hunting.

April 6th.

Kurma came up and discussed adoption, illustrating the disadvantages for the adopted child by his own reminiscences. This was the first time that he enlarged in detail about his own past life.

That day Kurma complained of heart pain which is due to the presence of Shook-sor *moong*. Two nights ago his mother-in-law dreamt of a kite on the roof which signifies the presence of Shook-sor *moong* and the day after Kurma had these pains. Shook-sor *moong* can only pain humans but can kill animals. Its exorcism, which must be performed by a Mun or Padem, is relatively simple, but a Padem cannot cure himself.

Kurma explained that since he had run away he had no claim on his adopting parents' property, which now goes to their nephews.

On this day also he first talked about Hlatam and her faculty for poisoning and said that his second wife had been killed by her.

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CHAPTER 4

Origin of the Lepchas and Village Administration

773 ITPUMU, the man, and Kumsiting, the woman, were born from the two peaks of Kinchinjunga. They had two children, a boy named Tashay Ting, and a girl to whom they gave the name of Nazong Nyu. These two married and had many children: but because they were brother and sister all the children were devils, and for this reason their mother refused to suckle them. Eventually they gave birth to a child which was not a demon. They gave it the name of Ril Bu Shing, and because it was their first real child the mother treated it tenderly and suckled it with loving care. When the demon children saw this they were very angry and decided to do away with Ril Bu Shing. This they did, and he was buried near a certain small peak on the right bank of the Talung river. The parents were very upset, and deciding that life was insupportable, they divided their property and separated, Tashay Ting going towards Tibet and his wife towards Sikkim. Prior to this the grandmother, Kumsiting, called all her demon grandchildren together and addressed them. All came with the exception of Dom Mung, the demon of leprosy, who did not hear the summons. She told them all that in future there would be no objection to their "eating the souls" of human beings; but, on the other hand, when offerings were made to them on behalf of these same humans by *Bongting*, *Mun* or *Rumfat Bu*, they must accept them, and that when they did this they must leave the humans alone. This is said to be the origin of making
• [753] sacrifices to the various demons. But since Dom Mung was not present at the meeting and did not receive these instructions there is no cure for persons stricken with leprosy. After this Kumsiting created man. The first man was called

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159 Pargeut's mother is the Umzet of the Inebus. A shrivelled-
[104] up old woman, she was chiefly remarkable for a huge pendulous goitre, which flapped from her neck like a half-deflated bladder. She seldom attended the services, but used occasionally to bring her granddaughter, whom we were
● [753] treating for boils. These she said were caused by a demon which was sitting on top of one of the marriage gifts when it was brought to the house. Although many ceremonies had been performed the boils remained, and even increased in number, and the aged Inebu could never understand why they started to disappear as soon as Geoffrey commenced to treat them. I remember once, shortly before we left, being suddenly awakened at dawn by the wailing of conch-shells, sounded from the terrace outside. It was a pouring
[763] wet morning; but she had clambered sorrowfully up through the dripping forest to have the death of her youngest granddaughter, a baby of two, announced to the village. I never saw her again.

* * * * *

Old Hlatam, the mother of Aga, has never advanced beyond the lowest rank of Inebu. But she was a regular
[788] attendant at the monastery and an inveterate turner of prayer-wheels, being seldom seen without one in her hand.
159 She has the reputation of being a poisoner; but it had never
754 occurred to the others that this was a somewhat strange occupation for a female religious. She is believed to have caused the death of six people up to date, as a result of which she is much feared by most of the villagers, who take care not to eat or drink at her hands. It is thought that she keeps the poison in a small copper box, and that she obtained it from the plains. Incidentally, when the people
[133] here talk of the plains they generally mean Darjeeling, which, although 6000 feet above the sea, and exceedingly hilly, compared with Lingtem might almost be regarded as level. It is said that owners of poison must abstain permanently from meat and alcohol; so be warned, reader,

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next time you find yourself dining with a vegetarian teetotaller! When anyone inherits poison it cannot be thrown away or its special guardian, the demon Sung-Mu-Panden-Hla-Mo, would revenge itself on the person who did this. Also if the holder of poison can find no use for it within a reasonable time it should be used to kill off one's own relations: to this there is no moral objection. Karma Karbari, who gave me this information, believes that his wife was poisoned by Hlatam, for once she drank *chi* at her house; and died three months later. She commenced by spitting blood. This passed and was followed by dysentery: hæmorrhages followed, and finally her teeth turned black and cracked. This was soon followed by death. Once a very old and learned Lama came to the village on pilgrimage, and on seeing Hlatam he at once told her to get away from him, as he could see that she was evil. Hlatam does not kill people deliberately; but because she owns poison she cannot help herself, and is in the power of its demon. Before she dies she will hand it over to her son, when he too will then be forced to use it. At one time people were so afraid of this old woman that she was driven out of the village by Tafoor's father, when he was Mukhtiyar of the district. It was believed that she always carried the poison on her person, and for this reason he followed her to the fields and completely stripped her; but he did not find anything. It was shortly after this that she decided to join the Church. Tafoor says that he does not entirely believe the story, but, all the same, if he is ever called to Hlatam's house he will certainly hold her responsible for any subsequent illness, and will take his revenge accordingly. The Mandal, too, confirms the story and says that he was present when Tafoor's father searched her. He does not, however, believe that she really does own poison, and thinks it wrong that the poor old woman should be so maligned.

* * * * *

While we were talking of Hlatam, Karma suddenly

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

159 complained of pains in the heart and said that they were
●753 caused by a demon known as Shuk-Sor Mung. When this
Mung attacks animals they always die; but in the case of
[782] human beings their evil can be averted by the sacrifice of two
chickens, one white and one speckled, together with the
usual offerings of grain. Heart trouble seems in some way to
be connected with poison. This is the story Karma gave
me:

173 About sixty years ago there were two brothers living in the
683 district named Tuk-Shyok and Sun-Kyon. They were
supernaturals, and were in the habit of killing people by
means of poison. Nobody would ever visit them; nor were
they allowed to attend any of the local ceremonies. It was
believed that they had caused the death of a number of
people, and for this reason a meeting was called at which it
was decided to kill them. Their mother, whose name was
Na-Sor, was a Mun; and as such had special powers. It was
decided to lock the door upon the two brothers after they had
gone to sleep one night and then set fire to the house. At the
time this happened their mother was not living with them,
but occupied a lone hut a short distance away. She, how-
ever, saw the house burning and ran to see what was
happening. She first jumped on the fire; and being a Mun
was able to use her powers instantly to put it out. As soon as
she had time to look around she found that her two sons were
at the point of death: each with a vessel of poison clasped to
his breast. Their life had almost ebbed away; their hearts
were just beating and no more. The elder could barely
speak; but he was able to summon up sufficient strength to
tell his mother what had happened, after which he fell back
gasping and died. The younger brother lingered on for three
more days. As he lay dying he said to the Mun: "Mother!
In our time we have poisoned many people; but, now we too
must die. But you will still live on; and you are a Mun; you
have powers denied to many."

Na-Sor understood what was expected of her, and after the
second son's death she remained alone in meditation for

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

it. A baby now made a pool on the floor; nobody took any notice, its mother merely spreading the mess with her bare foot across the boards.

The onlookers now said that the spirit had come, but I was unable to decide, either then or later, whether the Nunjimu was actually in a trance or not. I am inclined to think not, however; but it is probable that the incessant rattle had brought about a semi-hypnotic state. Certainly everyone looked half asleep. After a while she got up from the floor and started to dance, circling slowly round the room. She left her bell on the floor but still continued drumming. It was a slow rhythmic shuffle rather than a dance and reminded me of some aged ballerina trying over the steps of her youth; and failing lamentably. From time to time she turned on her heels and stamped. This caused the floor to shake and the effect was slightly impressive. All the time she went on droning, but her words were almost inaudible. At one moment the spirit was understood to have enquired what presents it was to receive. It said it had come from Nepal and could speak only the language of that country. I listened very intently but could not make out anything even remotely resembling Nepali. Gongyop asked the spirit to converse in Lepcha, at the same time lighting another of the altar lamps to emphasise the fact that this and all the other offerings had been put there in its honour.

The dance continued for about half an hour, and during its progress the Nunjimu gradually made known that the child was being troubled by Cherko Mung. It appeared, however, that its life was in no immediate danger. Tafoor afterwards told me that the cure was easy: it was merely a matter of a Mun making certain sacrifices, coupled with the reading of sacred books by a Lama. Now that the cause of the illness had been definitely established there was no further cause for worry.

The Nunjimu now returned to her former place on the floor. She never once stopped drumming, and now took up her bell again. Gradually the beat became slower and less

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

"The third son, hearing the elephant's request, 'prayed that he might be re-born in a form to neutralise the evil of the elephant's incarnation; and he was born as Lho-lun phel kyi dorje (the Lama who murdered Lan-darma, the Julian of Lamaism).'

"This stupa is also worshipped by the Nepalese Buddhists, viz., the Newars, the semi-aborigines of the Nepal valley, and the Murmi, a cis-Himalayan branch of Tibetan stock. The name 'Maguta'—pronounced 'Makuta'—is doubtless a contraction for *Makuṭa bandhana*, the pre-Buddhist 'crested chaitya,' such as existed at Buddha's death at Kusinagara, in the country of the Mallas."

* * * * *

The Go-sum is a strong and very potent cure, and is believed never to fail when correctly prescribed. It can be used to cure illness caused by no less than thirty different devils; also to counteract the effects of evil fortune, when this is "sent" by other humans through the medium of any of these same thirty demons. To ascertain when a Go-sum is necessary reference may be made to a book called *Kukdzeu*. This is a sort of Tibetan "Home doctor," and something like the medieval European books of witchcraft; a strange compound of magic and medicine. I should like, however, to make it clear that the Lepcha does not regard cures of this sort as magic. In his view this is definitely medical science. Provided the diagnosis has been correct the cure is merely a matter of carrying out the prescribed ceremony. In the same way that we are convinced that germs are killed by antiseptics, so does the sick Lepcha know that the offering of a Go-sum will cure him, provided his disease has been caused by any one of the thirty demons over which it has control. Should a patient not recover it is due not to any lack of potency in the Go-sum but to a mistaken diagnosis, a state of affairs which is, after all, not entirely unknown in the West!

I have been told that the Go-sum is unknown in Tibet

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

play; and a father will want his son to work in the fields."

When a man starts to hunt he must on no account eat any of the flesh of the first hundred animals he kills, unless by any chance he shoots them with a gun, in which case it does not matter. After killing a hundred animals the hunter will find that he has acquired a slight hollow in his right shoulder-blade; and when this appears it is an indication that he need no longer observe this prohibition, the disregard of which is thought to cause body sores and even leprosy. In the meantime the young hunter will hand his game over to friends and relations, who in return will give him chickens and eggs.

Pong Rum is the master of all animals, and for this reason he is the patron saint of hunters. Once every year, generally in October, all hunters make a sacrifice to this god. Parched rice, *chi*, fish, wild birds' flesh, ginger, arum, sugar-cane, banana, and some sticks of wormwood are offered to the god, and it is important that no woman should take any part in their preparation: nor, if possible, should she even know that they are being got ready, or the hunter will have no luck during the forthcoming year. There is no actual ceremony, the hunter merely taking all these articles and depositing them in some place in the forest where the god will see them.

In addition to this annual sacrifice, every time a hunter kills an animal or bird it is usual to singe its entrails and leave them as an offering to Pong Rum. Whenever a wild animal or bird is killed the god is always present and can be heard; he sounds like a stone whistling through the trees. As soon as this noise is heard the hunter will put the animal on the ground and offer it to the god, speaking very slowly and distinctly; but he leaves only the burned entrails behind. On his return home he should take care that no woman sees the animal's head, or it means that he will be unlucky next time he goes out hunting.

A man who goes in for hunting bears makes a kind of bamboo spring, which he fastens into a tree. If the bear treads on this it is at once precipitated into a pit below,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

ime as he unlocks it again. This applies even to his own [843]
ouse-door, which he may close but not fasten. He must
ot tie up any article of clothing in such a way that it forms a
ag; and if the string by which his ordinary bag is suspended
rom his shoulder happens to break he must on no account
ick it up; he may, however, recover any grain that spills
ut. He must not eat animals which have met their death
y accident, or which have been killed by some beast of
rey; nor should he look upon recently killed animals of any
ind. There is no objection to his killing animals; but if
e does so he must run away at once and let others deal
with the carcass. He must not eat birds caught in a trap;
or touch the iron or rope of a horse's bridle (this is some-
what unexpected in a completely horseless community), or
oth the mother and child will certainly die. Should he by
ny chance inadvertently touch a bridle during the period
f his wife's pregnancy the resulting evil may be averted by
eeping a bridle in the house and having it waved over his
wife at the actual time of delivery.

If he is making a bamboo mat, for instance, he must be careful not to finish it off completely; he should always leave a little piece at the end undone, and this applies to any other similar kind of work. There is no objection to either of the parents eating fruit which grows on trees or bushes; but the woman must be careful not to eat a double banana or her [826] child will be born with webbed toes. Similarly, should she eat a double head of millet it would cause the child to be born with extra fingers.

A man must also take care not to blow up a bladder, such as is used for storing grain, during the pregnancy period. If he happened to do this in the fifth month, for instance, it [763] would mean that the baby would die when it was five months old: if in the seventh month, then when it reached the age of seven months, and so on, until the actual day of birth. The actual death would be caused by a swollen stomach, a punishment sent by Gongbo Mung, from which the child would not recover. This particular precaution

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

844 descend with the afterbirth, thus causing the death of the mother. The following actions during pregnancy are also
[843] likely to have the same effect: eating carrion; eating rice scraped from the very bottom of the pot, and accordingly slightly burnt.

The umbilical cord is generally cut with a small knife by some woman helper; but if necessary the mother may do it herself. The slough of the cord is carefully kept and when it drops off is tied to the child's necklace. It is usually thrown away when the child reaches the age of four or five; but if lost or thrown away before this period it is said that the baby will crawl to the fire-place and scratch amongst the ashes searching for it. The actual cord, together with the afterbirth, is put into a small bamboo container, covered with a cloth, and taken to the forest by the father, where it is hung up on a tree out of reach of insects and animals. Some people say that the container is either buried in the
[753] ground or thrown into a stream; but there seems to be an idea that if the thing is buried by chance in wet ground, for instance, it means that the child will have weak and running eyes in later years; if buried in cultivation it would spoil the crops; and if the afterbirth should, by chance, be eaten by insects or wild animals it might later suffer from skin eruptions. For these reasons the container is usually hung up in a tree; but, as usual, it does not really matter.
[184] Kalimpong Lepchas think that if the afterbirth is taken too far away from the house there is a danger that a long time will elapse before another child is born; but this idea appears not to be known in Jongu.

845 A stillborn child is taken straight away and thrown into the nearest river. On the way back a Mun will meet the parents some little distance outside their house and will wave such things as thorny plants over them: but there is otherwise no form of ceremony; nor need the pre-natal precautions be continued up to the third day, when it is found that the child is already dead. When a child is stillborn, or dies very shortly after birth, a large stone is heated and the child's

: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

If she refuses her consent he gives merely the *Soo* payment, and the matter is closed: but if she is willing, as seems to be commonly the case, he may take the girl into his home as an additional wife. 848 595

No stigma attaches to the mother of a bastard and she is able to contract a normal marriage in due course. In view of the fact that so many women in Jongu are sterile, she may even be sought after and may get a richer husband than would otherwise have been the case; but the child will generally be left with its mother's parents. 848 [842]

When an illegitimate child is born its father will go secretly to a Lama to find out what its name is to be; but if the father refuses to acknowledge it, then the mother's father will make the necessary visit, since a Lama will not himself go to a house for the purpose of naming an illegitimate child. Apart from this minor matter, the usual third-day festivities will be carried out exactly as for a child born in wedlock. [553]

When a father refuses to acknowledge paternity a small ceremony is carried out before the child is born. A tree is pointed out as representing the child's father, and a small bamboo sliver, meant to represent his penis, is stuck into the base of it. This is then spat upon in a contemptuous fashion, after which the tree is addressed in an insulting voice and told that it is the father of the child. It is thought that when the child is born the tree will wither.

One curious case in connection with illegitimacy may be mentioned in passing. There is in Lingtem a certain family of which several members have died of leprosy. The nephew of the present head of the family, whose father died of this disease, is said by his uncle to be a bastard. This, however, is thought by the rest of the village to be a pure fiction, and it is said that he has made the boy an "honorary" bastard, so to speak, to clear him from the herditary taint of leprosy. This will do away with the difficulty, which might otherwise ensue, of finding him a wife, when the time comes for him to marry. [753] ●

Most people seem to think that it is desirable for the first- 842

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

intolerable, and in the course of countless generations they have so conditioned their feelings that this particular emotion never arises: or if it really is an inherent instinct, then they have sublimated it to such an extent that it causes no psychological disturbance.

Although the question of sexual jealousy hardly arises, it would be absurd to suppose that any man, even a Lepcha, is completely indifferent to his wife's promiscuity. For this reason, in Chodu's words: "It is better to copulate with one's sister-in-law out in the forest, because there is no privacy in the home. Out in the forest it is possible to be more passionate, whereas in the presence of others a certain amount of restraint must be exercised." An elder brother will be angry if he actually sees his younger brother copulating with his wife, and will say some such thing as: "Look here, you should not do that sort of thing with my wife while I'm about, and certainly not in my presence"; but apart from this he will take no action.

It is said that when a man habitually sleeps with his elder brother's wife the latter is liable to suffer from stomach-ache and diarrhœa, especially towards the end of each Tibetan month. When a man has pains of this sort he will naturally suspect his wife, but there is really little that he can do. He may suggest to his wife that she breaks off relations with his brother, or can ask her to obtain a piece of his clothing. If he wears this himself, in the form of a charm, it will be found that the pair will cease to be interested in one another and in course of time will give up sleeping together. It should be clearly noted, however, that the object of this is to cure the elder brother's stomach-ache and not to stop the woman having sexual relations with her husband's brother, to which no objection is taken.

It is an understood thing that most normal men do have relations with their elder brothers' wives from time to time, and while the subject is not generally discussed among brothers no one would make any attempt to deny the fact if asked; not because there is any question of jealousy arising,

4:Nebesky-Wojkowitz E-5 (1950-1951) 1952
AK5 Lepcha AK5

changes at the moment of death into a spirit, named *Mŭk nyam*; this change itself is termed *Hyit*. The *A pil* is said to get scared very easily and when frightened can even leave the body; the separation of the soul from the body results however in the instantaneous death of the human being. To protect small children from this danger, mothers often fasten round the neck or armwrist of the child a string with a snail shell on it, "as refuge for the soul".[10]

Illness and death are attributed by the Lepchas to a number of malignant demons who have to be propitiated by various ceremonies, in order to prevent their attacks or to rescue a victim from their influence. Among the host of these evil supernaturals, whose names and spheres of influence vary with the traditions of the different parts of the Lepcha land, there are some who are believed to be especially dangerous as they do not satisfy their greed by harming people through illness, but who try either to eat man's flesh or to destroy his soul. A few of these supernatural beings, as *Sang grong mung*, *Dŭt mung* and his wife *Sŭ mo mung*, etc. who seem to have been at one time widely known and feared among the Lepchas, are believed to have vanished since man started clearing the jungle and to settle even in the remotest parts of Sikkĭm.

Sang grong mung and his wife,—the supernaturals of the Lepchas mostly appear in pairs—are said to have been half men and half apes. Their abode were deep, dark caverns in the hills. They lived on human flesh and to satisfy their hunger they often tried to get people into their power by offering them presents. The person, who had met the *Sang grong mung* or his consort, had no other choice than to accept the gift; however, he had to take it with the back of his hands and not with the palms as customary, otherwise his life was lost.

Dŭt mung and his wife *Sŭ mo mung*—who was always accompanied by her servant *Sŭ mo thor*—had children and they lived in a house, just like men. Their hunting ground was the jungle, where they killed lonely travellers and ate their flesh. *Sŭ mo mung*, who was an ugly ogre with long matted hair and emaciated breasts, is said to have been very fond of seducing young men. To achieve her aim, she could change herself—by brushing her hair back and rubbing her body—into a lovely girl. She induced her victim, to follow her to her house, where she killed and devoured him; but sometimes, if she liked the man, she kept him with her for some time, hiding him from her jealous husband.

Another demon, frequently held responsible for the death of a person, is *Mă zŏm mung*, who is said to appear in the form of a huge black dog with ferociously gleaming eyes and a flaming mouth. To

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950) 1951
AK5 Lepcha AK5

a small image, which is afterwards connected with the thread-cross. Then the whole structure is offered to Deut-moong and finally somebody, who was designated by the lama, has to take this offering to a place in the forest where it is left to be eaten by animals. This ritual also corresponds to the ancient Tibetan *lTo* rites previously mentioned.[171] In this connection it is interesting to note, that also in Tibet leaves or pieces of paper are placed in the thread-cross, usually in such a manner as to form the main features of a face. Occasionally a ceremonial scarf (*Kha btags*) is draped over the *mDos*.

8. RITE FOR AVERTING INFANTILE DIARHOEA

If several children die of infantile diarhoea, it is assumed that their death was caused by a malignant spirit, called Sande moong. The Lepchas know two ceremonies for appeasing his anger. For the first a black dog is made with a rider on its back and two *yeu*, a black and a white one are placed upon the dog's head, while a red thread-cross is planted behind the rider.

The second ceremony has already been described elsewhere.[39] In this ceremony a life-sized cat with a very long tail is made out of dough. A rider, sitting upon a horse's saddle is placed on its back and four images of men are put in front of and behind the cat. The animal is led by strands of coloured thread, wound around its neck and held by the rider and the images in front. The rider carries a red thread-cross; on the left-front side of the tray a white *Yue* is placed, on the right front a black one, on the right hand rear a white and on the rear left a yellow. To each *Yeu* a *Tamsing* with wool of the same colour as the thread-cross is added.

9. EXORCISM, CALLED DEUT SHAGU KYOB

For curing a person who has fallen ill through the influence of an evil spirit called Hlamen Djeme Pum, a

[See cat. 116 p. 78. - Analyst]

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Bhotanese, and others. Rheumatism is frequent, and inter- 164
mittent fevers, with ague; also violent and often fatal remittents, almost invariably induced by sleeping in the hot valleys, especially at the beginning and end of the rains. The European complaints of liver and bowel disease are all but unknown. Death is regarded with horror. The 761
dead are burnt or buried, sometimes both; much depending 764
on custom and position. Omens are sought in the entrails 787
of fowls, &c., and other vestiges of their savage origin are still preserved, though now gradually disappearing.

The Lepchas profess no religion, though acknowledging 771
the existence of good and bad spirits. To the good they pay no heed; "Why should we?" they say, "the good spirits do us no harm; the evil spirits, who dwell in every rock, grove, and mountain, are constantly at mischief, and to them we must pray, for they hurt us." Every 756
tribe has a priest-doctor; he neither knows nor attempts to practise the healing art, but is a pure exorcist; all [753] ●
bodily ailments being deemed the operations of devils, who are cast out by prayers and invocations. Still they acknowledge the Lamas to be very holy men, and were the [793]
latter only moderately active, they would soon convert all the Lepchas. Their priests are called "Bijooas:" they profess mendicancy, and seem intermediate between the begging friars of Tibet, whose dress and attributes they assume, and the exorcists of the aboriginal Lepchas: they sing, dance (masked and draped like harlequins), beg, bless, curse, and are merry mountebanks; those that affect [771]
more of the Lama Boodhist carry the "Mani," or revolving praying machine, and wear rosaries and amulets; others again are all tatters and rags. They are often employed to carry messages, and to transact little knaveries. The 756
natives stand in some awe of them, and being besides of a 781

10: Waddell G-5 (1891) 1899 AK5 Lepcha AK5

776 very numerous; but none of the many so-called Lepcha deities enumerated by Mr. Risley [1] are Lepcha at all — all of them are purely Tibetan Lamaistic gods of Hindoo type, even to their names. The truly Lepcha divinities, on the contrary, are mostly of an animistic type. The majority are either the malignant ghosts of deceased ancestors or the spirits inhabitating natural objects — for the Lepcha views every animal, plant, river and stone as having a spiritual personality like his own.

The benevolent class of spirits are called *Rdam* in contradistinction to the malicious *Mung* who are supposed to cause disease, death and other disasters. The chief of the good spirits is *Te-shi Tak-bo Rdam* [2] or "The Sky-existing Head-Father-Spirit", who also is called *Tashi-ting* [3] or "The Sky-existing Lord". This ancient name for the chief Lepcha divinity was transferred to a Lamaist Saint by the Lama who composed the afore mentioned *Tashe-sung* in order to secure for his Lamaist hero the homage and worship of the Lepchas [4]. Many of the minor good spirits are of the nature of good fairies. One of these is a water nymph called 'The Rainbow Fairy' (*Tung-kung-mit*) who haunts the rainbow spray of rivers and cascades; and those who would fish at such places usually worship her [5]. Those spirits are sometimes entitled 'The Unseen' (*Ma*) and the prayer to them is called *Ma-e*.

The malignant devils or *Mung* [6] are of many kinds. Those who infest the depths of the forest are called "Angry fire" (*Mi-gdut*) and in appearance like flames of fire as tall as the highest trees. Those inhabiting swampy muddy springs are *Lang-nong* [7] and those
● [753] haunting rocks and caves are *Lang-s'i*. These latter cause fatal dropsy in those persons who desecrate their haunts by lighting fires or soiling the stones in the vicinity. The especial abode of the chief Mung, who is called 'The father Devil', is at a rock amidst ruinous landslips on the gorge of Sivok [8] where the great affluent river of the Sikhimese mountains, the Tista, rushes into the plains. Another celebrated Mung is "The goge" (*A-kyong*) who inhabits a cliff in the forest of Gol below Darjiling.

Amongst deified ancestors the chief are Fodung Ting and Tek-kong Tek and their wives Ne-zong Ñyo and Ne-Kong Nai. These are the first traditional chiefs of the tribe, and the name Tek-kong, meaning 'to preserve independence', is suggestive of some struggle in
[622] which this legendary chief was successful [9], though the Lepchas never seem to have developed any organized coherence or polity. Their so-called 'Kings' were only headmen, and lived in huts little better than the poorest members of the tribe.

Worship is rendered almost exclusively to the bad spirits and not to the good. For,

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192 [1]) loc. cit. 9.

[2]) *Te-shi* is from *Te* sky and *shi* to be. *Tak*, a contraction for *Tiak* head, and *bo* father — literally 'the giver'.

[3]) *Ting* (*A-Ting*) = lord or supreme, probably from *Ting*, to soar aloft (? hence *Ting-kyi*, the Kestrul or Sparrow-hawk). Compare with Burmese '*A-tong*', honorific exclamation to superiors.

[4]) The name in this book is altered to *Te-she*, the Tibetan *Shi* a judge being substituted for the Lepcha affix *Shi*.

[5]) Two classes of spirits incidentally mentioned by Mr. M. (p. 21) are 'personal demons' *Nung-lyan-no* and *Ka-t'ang-ñi*, guardians of males and females respectively.

[6]) This word is perhaps related to the Chinese *Mo*, a devil.

[7]) This *Lang* is said to mean „fallen down" and not *Lang*, a stone, though this is doubtful.

[8]) *Sáá-fak*, literally impenetrable jungle, debris or peelings. This wild ravine is lined by the debris of the inner mountains and overgrown with densest jungle.

[9]) Other 'Kings', who are mentioned in songs, are Turve and Sákong. This last was said by the Lamas to have visited Hades and returned to tell the tale — a *Te-tak* — as noted by me in my Buddhism of Tibet p. 168.

10: Waddell G-5 (1891) 1899 AK5 Lepcha AK5

776 say the Lepchas, the good spirits never do us any harm; it is only the malignant spirits
[756] which we have to fear. To propitiate the most malitious of the evil spirits are priests and
priestesses or rather wizards, all of whom are absolutely illiterate — unable to read or
write. And their ritual is of the most elementary and loosest kind. They live like the
[178] ordinary members of the tribe and have no temples, for the Lepchas have no images nor
[177] any visible objects of devotion, though lately some of them occasionally worship in Lama-
temples.

The priest is called *Bong-ting* or 'Lord-Oracle' literally 'Mouth-Lord' [1]); the mouth-
756 piece of communication between the poor Lepcha and the Great Spirit. But more in
demand than the priest is the priestess, the *Mâân* or *Mâân-mak*, who may be the wife
of the Bong-ting, though not necessarily so; and both of these offices are usually hereditary.
This priestess or priest is resorted to in every case of serious disease, for the Lepcha
● [753] believes that disease is always one to the machinations of an evil spirit and he has no
faith at all in medicines. In the priestly rites there is no dancing as in the Shamanistic
Bon of Central Asia. In their worship, which is of fear and not love, they invoke the
Mung or other evil spirit by cutting a bamboo into pieces and sticking the pieces into the
ground with bits of stone Then they propitiate the spirit with sacrifice of a fowl or a
pig, and implore it to release its victim. Occasionally they perform sympathetic magic in
cases of severe pain by drawing blood with a dry knife or spike of bamboo, without
wounding the skin, like the Pawang wizards of the Malay Archipelago [2]). And so highly
are these poor aboriginal priests esteemed, even by the immigrant Tibetans in Sikhim, that
these latter, although professing the superior Lamaism, frequently condescend to employ
these Lepcha priests and priestesses, in the belief that the latter hold especially close
relations with the indigenous spirits of the country. It is a question how far this partiality
for female priests may be a survival of the matriarchy before referred to, or whether it
may be owing to most of the malignant divinities being female and so requiring a
female priest.

533 Coming now to the songs themselves, we see that they are idyllic in character. Their
words refer mostly to the inscrutable mystery of the origin and destiny of man and the
[824] primitive passion of love. It is curious to notice how they gratefully associate themselves
with the Bamboo, whose stout stem supplies them with the sheltering frame-work, walls
and thatch of their huts, with fuel, bows and arrows; its larger joints afford water-jugs,
cooking pots and pans; its smaller joints supply bottles, smoking pipes and flutes; its
branches make a springy couch; its bark supplies baskets, umbrellas and ropes, and its
tender shoots are eaten as food. The songs are sung usually to the accompaniment of a
[534] flute or a sort of Jew's harp. This small harp is also used by the Nâgas and other
Malayan races. It is made of bamboo and decorated by curving or burned in 'poker'-work
with a plaited or basket-pattern. It is called *Tang-dyru* — the name *Tang* being apparently
onomatopoetic for the twanging sound it produces. The flute called *Po-lit* is also of bamboo
as its name denotes and it is decorated like the harp.

The melody of two of the chief of these songs I am able to give here through the

[1]) This title is practically identical with the 'Gods' mouth (*Hla-k'a*) of the Bon religion. Cf. my Buddhism of Tibet p. 462. The term *Yok* or *Yok-mas* is usually applied to the Lamas and Nepalese priests, and may be a corruption of the Indian *Yogi*. An assistant-priest is called *Tyol-ba*.

[2]) Malay Sketches by F. A. Swettenham, London 1895.

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Ayek-rum and Alat-rum, have an important part in their worship. The spirits that protect individual persons are also of importance. This is particularly true of Hit-rum who is the protecting spirit of the Bong-thing. When a Bong-thing dies his soul, like a shadow, goes to Hit-rum. The Dān-si Bong-thing from Ka-fār has the following nine protecting spirits: Sur-mu-mu-rum, Bong-thing-rum, Dang-mu-rum, Niu-leg-rum, Mōn-lam-rum, Tok-tzōm-rum, Darmit-rum, Nam-jin-rum. These he must honour in a very special manner. Thus we see that the Rong believe in the existence of many gods and spirits and take pains in arranging them in the order of male and female couples.

In contrast with these benign gods are the innumerable hordes of demons and goblins who cause harm to men and animals, fields and forests. There are tracks in the mountains which are considered to be the footsteps of the gigantic monster, Mi-gat-mung. Ma-ra-mung is a very evil demon, who flies up into the sky and reveals himself there in the form of comets, northern lights and other astral phenomena. Each one of the human illnesses is caused by a demon: Ru-mung, consumption; Dom-mung, leprosy; etc., and these constitute the great flock of disease-demons. Goblins and witches lurk in the mountains, woods, gorges and deserts. It is necessary to obtain safeguards and measures of protection against all demons and evil spirits, and these are vouchsafed by the Supreme Being through his priests, the Mun and the Bong-thing.

(g) The Mun and the Bong-thing

Stocks quotes an illuminating legend concerning the origin of the Bong-thing. Through the interchanging of the Waters of Life and Death the Mung demons had acquired immortality. It became incumbent on God to set right the order of things. "Everything was nearly completed, but a Bong-thing was required as a mediator to speak between the Rum and the Humans" (Rum made many efforts that failed). "...Then there was only one child of the Creator left, and he didn't wish to leave home, but the Creator who loved him like a mother, told him he ought to go and see his brothers

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773 and sisters, the Himalaya Mountains, and the lakes and all
776 the rivers, in order that he might become a Bong-thing to
793 help the humans against the evil spirits.

And the child asked It-mo what would be the best things to carry with him on the journey, and the Creator gave him some ginger (salep), some garlic (paki-mun-gu) and a tree, the fruit of which he could place on a stick and burn slowly
[278] like a lamp (the safi-kun). And all these things are used externally and internally by the Bong-thing today, and from all these plants and bulbs medicine is made.

Taking all these bulbs the son came to the Lung-tun-parten tableland in the Himalayas but he found that the Mung had already come to that place; they had, indeed, spread over the whole country; they were in all the mountains and in all the trees and in all the caves. So he said to them, 'I was sent to go round the world, but you seem to be everywhere before me, so I will return to the Creator.'

[783 But when he turned and was leaving the Mung caught
782] hold of him saying, 'On one condition we will do everything you command;—when we worry the human beings with disease and illness we will go away and leave them in peace if, in return, you will give us some fowls, eggs, pigs or any other animals.' The Bong-thing said, 'You force me to do this. Only swear you will leave all human beings in peace. I will call my brothers Sakbri-bu and Sahnang-bu to act as witnesses.' To this they all agreed and at the Partam-Sakber, the Mung swore that when they worried human persons with illness they would leave the sick person in peace were the Bong-thing do attend to the patient, and propitiate them, the Mung, by giving them offerings of a cow, a pig or of several goats. To make doubly sure, the Bong-thing asked the Mung to swear by spitting on a rock there, which they did, and so great was the oath that it shattered the rock to pieces. And again he asked them to swear and spit in the lake which they did; but the oath was so great that it caused the lake to dry up. Yet once more he asked them to swear by spitting on a tree which they did; but the tree could not bear the weight of the oath and it fell. This was the covenant between the Bong-thing and the Mung and we, the Rong folk, believe this is the origin of the Bong-thing.....And when

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of rice and butter are in the first instance brought forward. These are offered with little roasted birds, fish, incense and chi, and in addition a rupee in money. Prior to the actual offering, garlands of flowers are prepared and hung up in the house. The flowers are called "Sa-gi." "Amial" means garlands, and it is from these that the festival derives its name "Sa-gi-sa-amial." The god of power is also called "Sa-gi." "Sa-gi-fat" means sacrifice and annual festival. After the performance of the sacrifice the men and women begin to dance, and during the dance they sometimes fall to the ground and twitch and tremble. They are then lifted up and continue with the dance. The onlookers keep watch to ensure that none of the dancers escapes from the room. The spirit of my father who is now dead has passed over to my brother, Sa-bō."

Next comes the actual vocation. This always takes place during an illness when the physical powers of the patient are at a low ebb. We had the opportunity of observing the case of a girl who was, however, not a Lepcha but a Kami. The sequence of events is nonetheless identical. The child is said to be possessed by a Limbu spirit and at such times she speaks the Limbu language. The people, therefore, insist that she must become a soothsayer. The girl gets epileptic fits and froths at the mouth. The nerves are upset and distraught and the people see in all this a case of possession by the spirit. The girl still is with her parents and prays each day at definite times to the spirit and renders it homage. At a later stage the girl is brought to a teacher ; not however to a Lepcha teacher, but to a Nepalese magician, since a Lepcha will not teach a member of another tribe.

All those who receive this summons from the spirit must necessarily answer the summons and go to a teacher who will give them the required initiation, instruction, practices, and teach them the prayers. A great sacrifice, mentioned by the Han-bu-ni Mun above, has to be performed by way of initiation. Gorer describes this ceremony as follows, "In the house a little table is set up. On it to the right lies a scarf of honour with a rupee. In the middle is a wooden vessel which is filled with butter round the rim. On the right is a stone incense-burner filled with Tibetan

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incense, and dry twigs from the cypress tree. In front of the little table is a winnower on which parts of the animal sacrifices are arranged in the following manner: opposite the vessel is the skull turned towards the table. Behind it are the entrails. To the left of the skull is a hind leg, to the front is a foreleg. Between the foreleg and the entrails is a thigh with a little meat. When everything is arranged, the teacher sits behind the table a little to the left, in front of the scarf. His pupil sits on his right. Then he lays the scarf on the pupil's hand and recites the prayers, which the apprentice repeats after him sentence by sentence. Then the master makes a ceremonial speech to the initiated in which he explains: 'Now the price for the freeing of your body is paid to the demon, but under one condition, that you consecrate your life to the Mun-god, and that you offer up your body as his dwelling place.' After this speech he hands the vessel filled with the chi to his pupil so that he can drink from it three times from three different places. This drinking of the chi from the vessel garnished with butter stands for the actual ritual consecration. With this the pupil is bound for three years to study with his master. At the end of the instruction, a second sacrifice of a bullock is performed. With this the pupil is given full powers and can function independently.

The most important sacrificial offering for all these ceremonies is the bullock. An ox is desirable. If a pig is given the neophite will be unable to expel Lom-doon-moong (the devil of Jaundice). If a goat, he will be unable to expel Mat-moong, (the devil who produces various unpleasant symptoms which are the results of ancestral quarrels)."[58]

According to our investigations, the Mun and the Bong-thing are both equally powerful magicians. They only, can expel demons and appease the gods through sacrifice. Both, men as well as women, can be Mun. The Mun spirit is not a female spirit but can choose either men or women as its servants. The Bong-thing can only be a man. The Mun and the Bong-thing whom we were able to observe, do not wear any special ceremonial dress or ornaments during their activities, neither do they use the double skull-drum (damaru)

58. op. cit. p. 479.